

Braille Monitor



JUNE, 1975

VOICE OF THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND

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THE BRAILLE MONITOR

A Publication of the
NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND
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SPEAKING FOR THE BLIND—IT IS THE BLIND SPEAKING FOR THEMSELVES.

THE BRAILLE MONITOR

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* * *

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"I give, devise, and bequeath unto NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND, a District of Columbia nonprofit corporation, the sum of \$____ (or, "____percent of my net estate", or "the following stocks and bonds: ____") to be used for its worthy purposes on behalf of blind persons."

If your wishes are more complex, you may have your attorney communicate with the Berkeley Office for other suggested forms.

THE BRAILLE MONITOR
JUNE 1975

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A BODY BLOW TO NAC: MARYLAND INDUSTRIES WITHDRAWS FROM MEMBERSHIP

Thursday, April 24, 1975 was a fateful date for NAC. NAC may even come to think of it as the Ides of April for on that day a trusted ally dealt a blow which is at least ominous for its future—Maryland Industries de-NAC-ed.

Once more a NAC-accredited agency is being investigated by a State government for poor performance. Once again NAC's accrediting practices are brought into question. The Board of Maryland Industries for the Blind concluded that NAC accreditation was not very helpful.

Triggered by reports indicating gross mismanagement, the Governor ordered a sweeping reorganization of Maryland Industries which has facilities in Baltimore, Cumberland, and Salisbury. George Parker, who served as chief administrator of the program since 1968 and who was also executive vice president of Maryland Industries, was dismissed as of January 31, 1975. Other staff members were dismissed in the weeks which followed.

Maryland Industries has a board of eleven members. Seats on the board are held by a variety of business and professional people including former NAC Board member Dr. Richard Hoover of long-cane fame. It also includes three Federationists—John McCraw, president of our Maryland affiliate, Georgia Meyers, and Louise Emanuel. These three formed a persistent, if outvoted, minority.

However, they talked, supplied materials, and otherwise attempted to persuade the other members of the board to help reform NAC or to unaccredit from an organization rapidly losing its own credibility. Their endeavors paid off. When the vote came on whether or not to renew NAC accreditation, the vote was a firm and unanimous "No."

The Maryland shops were established in 1908 and they never have been very productive. The Maryland affiliate conducted a long campaign to bring labor rights to the workers and to update the shops' industries and other programs. John McCraw notes sadly that shops for the retarded are much better than those for the blind.

At our 1974 National Convention we heard a number of state administrators of programs for the blind say that they would not accredit with NAC or that they would unaccredit as soon as possible. As we know, a number have. And now Maryland is added to the list. Who will be next? How many agency members will NAC continue to claim? Will NAC now recognize its plight and reform? "When will they ever learn" to listen to the largest consumer group in the country about what they are doing and how they should do it? The National Federation of the Blind has a number of answers if NAC will ask the questions.

□

NEW AFFILIATE: WISCONSIN

BY
JOYCE SCANLAN

April 12, 1975, will long be remembered by the blind of Wisconsin as well as by all members of the National Federation of the Blind, for on that day the National Federation of the Blind of Wisconsin came into being. In attendance at the organizing meeting in Madison were blind persons from all parts of the State of Wisconsin, members of the organizing team, and Dr. Kenneth Jernigan, President of the NFB, who presided at the meeting. The adoption of a state constitution involved a lively discussion, and an impressive list of qualified candidates made the election of officers very exciting. The president is Edward Taylor, Assistant Manager of the Martin Luther King Community Center in Milwaukee, who has the experience and enthusiasm to lead the affiliate well.

The meeting in Madison came about as the result of the work of about twelve people who moved into the State on April 4. John Taylor, Shirley and Jim Crawford, Curt Chong, Tim Aune, JoAnn Fernandes, Arlene Gashel, Joyce Lebowitz, Carl and Ruby Kuhl, Creig Slayton, and I hunted up the blind people and talked with them about the Federation. With the ACB so firmly entrenched in Wisconsin and the close relationship between Council and agency, we had prepared ourselves for some real problems in getting our message across to the blind people at large. This, however, proved not to be the case. We had no difficulty whatsoever locating prospective members. Our real problem was not having enough time to see all of those we did know of. We heard stories of how the Council was too "clubby," conservative, and not

open to younger people with new ideas. Many individuals expressed concern that the organization of the blind was interested only in social and recreational matters. We heard of blind persons with guide dogs who had been denied entrance to restaurants and other public places. In short, the blind people of Wisconsin welcomed the National Federation of the Blind so that they could work together and formulate effective programs.

Not all was sunshine and open arms for our organizing team. In our indiscriminate method of calling individuals on the telephone, we did encounter a few "hostiles."

We also found a bit of the Oklahoma type of intimidation in Wisconsin. In a phone conversation with a blind employee of the Industries for the Blind workshop we were told that if we were to bring some literature down to the shop and ask for him personally, he would be able to talk with us and give us his membership dues. He thought we could also have a tour of the shop if we liked. So we made our way to visit Blind Industries and recruit our new member. We were ushered through the door separating the executive area where only sighted workers appeared to be from the noisy, dirty, stuffy shop area where the blind workers were. I was marshalled through the aisles like a piece of heavy furniture by the shop supervisor. He pushed me into a small office and placed me in a chair from which I immediately walked away. The blind man we were to see was patrolled down the hall in the same way,

and after he had been placed in a chair and the door shut, we began to talk about the Federation. Two supervisors were in the room, one of whom was not identified until we asked who he was. When the blind employee found that his bosses were present, he said, "Oh, I was thinking of joining the ACB, but maybe I can listen to these records anyway." Well, we understand the position you were in, sir. You have the support of more than fifty thousand other blind people in improving conditions for employment so that this kind of intimidation and harrassment will not continue. Maybe you should think again about whether or not the ACB is the way to go.

The incident at Blind Industries is even more interesting in light of a conversation two team members had with George Qualls, employee of the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation of Wisconsin, and nephew of Floyd Qualls, erstwhile director of the Oklahoma League for the Blind (a sheltered workshop in Oklahoma City) and president of the American Council of the Blind. Mr. George Qualls went to some trouble to tell us that his uncle was a man of high moral character who would not indulge in threats involving the private lives of the League workers. We listened quietly to the tale of denial which became more and more incriminating as it rambled on. Well, Messrs. Qualls and Qualls, we've seen it in Oklahoma and we've seen it in Wisconsin.

From now on the blind of Wisconsin can look to the Federation as a means to solve common problems. With its statewide membership, it will represent a broad cross section of the blind population. The strength of the NFB of Wisconsin lies in the vigor and enthusiasm of its members. They have long waited for the Federation to return to their State, and now they can

apply their collective resources toward solving the problems which blind people across the country face. One of their first priorities is to make arrangements to attend the National Federation of the Blind convention in Chicago.

When the ACB organized an affiliate in Wisconsin a few months ago (shortly after its former affiliate the Wisconsin Council of the Blind had voted to withdraw), much was made of the fact that 103 people paid dues as charter members. When the National Federation of the Blind of Wisconsin came into being April 12, 1975, in Madison, it had 146 paid-up members—and prospects of a lot more soon to join. The officers and leaders are an impressive cross section of the blind of the State, giving real promise for organizational growth and accomplishment. Ed Taylor, the president, has a master's degree in social work. He is dynamic and fearless. He is steady and mature. He will not be unreasonably belligerent; but he will not be bought off, intimidated, or flimflammed. He will lead.

The first vice president is Kathryn Lynch—sophomore special education major, University of Wisconsin at Whitewater; second vice president, Kathleen Goetsch—rehabilitation teacher, Bureau for the Blind, Oshkosh; secretary, Linda Mentink—freshman majoring in music education, University of Wisconsin at Whitewater; treasurer, John Johnson—masseur, Pain Rehabilitation Center, La Crosse; board members: Kathleen Sullivan—rehabilitation teacher, Bureau for the Blind, La Crosse; Lowell Thompson—recent blindness, former insurance examiner for State, Madison; Janet Bunkelman, junior majoring in special education, University of Wisconsin at Whitewater; Allan W. Frederick, assistant vocational guidance counsellor at Mt. Horeb High School, also

farms and manages property.

proud. On Wisconsin!

It is an affiliate of which we can all be

□

WISCONSIN ORGANIZES: BACKGROUND AND CORRESPONDENCE

BY

KENNETH JERNIGAN

At the NFB Convention in 1972 we made a commitment to ourselves and the blind of the Nation that every state would be organized by the time of the 1975 Convention. Wisconsin and South Dakota were the last two states, and each presented its own unique problems. The '75 Convention is now at hand, and there is every prospect that the commitment will be kept.

In the early days of the Federation (before the civil war of the late 50's and early 60's) we had an affiliate in Wisconsin. It was the Wisconsin Council of the Blind. This organization was suspended from membership in 1961. For a number of years it remained unaffiliated. Then, a few years ago, it affiliated with the American Council of the Blind.

Attitudes in Wisconsin were sharply divided during the days of the civil war. As we began to contemplate creating the new affiliate in the State, there was every reason to believe that a considerable body of Federation sentiment still existed.

In 1973 I was contacted by two of the leading members of the Wisconsin Council of the Blind, Mr. Alton Davis and Mr. Ed Heisel. They came to Des Moines, and we discussed organization matters. Mr. Davis said that he felt that it would not be seemly for the Wisconsin Council to consider applying for NFB affiliation until after the retirement of George Card as executive

secretary of the Council later in the year. I told them that I could understand this feeling.

He also asked how much "crow" the Wisconsin Council would have to eat in order to come back as an affiliate. I told them that we were not interested in rehashing old issues; that what we wanted (and all that we wanted) was a strong, representative organization of the blind.

Under date of May 30, 1974, I sent the following letter to Mr. Herbert Pitz, president of the Wisconsin Council of the Blind:

DEAR MR. PITZ: As I think you know, Mr. Alton Davis and Mr. Ed Heisel talked with me in Des Moines several months ago about matters of mutual concern. Since that time I have had further conversations with Mr. Davis, the most recent being by telephone today. Mr. Davis tells me that the Wisconsin Council of the Blind would be receptive to a letter from me indicating that I would like to speak to the Council concerning organizational matters. It is to that end that I write you.

I understand that Sunday July 7, would be the most convenient time for the Council. Unfortunately, I will be unavailable at that time. As an alternative I would hope that I might be able to talk with the members of the Council on Sunday, July 14. I could come to whatever place the Council

designates and am flexible as to the time of day. I would hope that I might be able to have approximately an hour and a half in which to discuss organizational and related matters and to answer questions and exchange ideas. I truly believe that such a meeting could be productive and mutually beneficial.

In the meantime I would like to extend an invitation to attend the upcoming Convention of the National Federation of the Blind to any of the members of the Wisconsin Council or its affiliates who are able to come. They would be most welcome. As you may know, the meeting will be held at the Palmer House Hotel in Chicago. Registration will begin Sunday morning, June 30, and final adjournment will occur Friday afternoon, July 5. This will undoubtedly be the largest gathering of blind people ever held, with approximately two thousand people present. All meetings are completely open, and all are welcome to attend. The program should be both interesting and stimulating.

I hope that it will be possible for the members of the Council to meet with me in July. I shall wait to hear from you and shall hope for an affirmative response.

Cordially,

KENNETH JERNIGAN

President

National Federation of the Blind

Mr. Pitz replied on June 11, 1974, as follows:

DEAR MR. JERNIGAN: Your letter requesting the opportunity to discuss with

the Wisconsin Council of the Blind organizational matters which might be of mutually beneficial concern reached me a few days late due to the postal system's failure to deliver promptly. I hope this brief delay does not incur any inconvenience to you.

As I understand Mr. Alton Davis communicated to you by phone on May 30, the Wisconsin Council of the Blind would, upon receipt of such a request, respond favorably by setting up a meeting at a reasonably soon time. We had anticipated that July 7 might prove to be too close to the close of the NFB's Convention and some of us, therefore, had considered the alternative date of July 14, even before receiving your confirmation of difficulty with the 7th as the date for such a meeting.

I, as President of the Wisconsin Council of the Blind, have therefore scheduled a meeting for Sunday, July 14, at 1:00 p.m. at which hearing you and exchanging questions, in executive session of our Council, will be the sole item of business until 2:30 p.m. We consider this a meeting for exchange of ideas with no intention whatever of making any sort of commitment at that time.

I almost omitted the place of meeting. It will be the office of the Wisconsin Council of the Blind, 1245 East Washington Avenue, Madison. We will doubtless for convenience of space meet in the conference room in the basement of that building rather than in fact in the office of the Council.

I shall then be pleased to welcome and introduce you to the Wisconsin Council of the Blind at 1:00 p.m. on Sunday, July 14.

Yours very truly,

HERBERT PITZ
President
Wisconsin Council of the Blind

As scheduled, I met with the Wisconsin Council of the Blind July 14, 1974. Mostly the meeting was cordial. There was a little hostility from one or two people, but not much. In the halls a number of the leaders told me that they recognized that the American Council of the Blind was a dead end. Some of them said they would like to see the Wisconsin Council disaffiliate from ACB and come back into the Federation.

At the 1974 convention of the American Council of the Blind, Herbert Pitz, Wisconsin Council president, was elected to membership on the ACB Board of Directors. This, along with other straws in the wind, made it seem doubtful that the Wisconsin Council would leave the ACB and (in real unity) apply for readmission to the Federation. Under date of August 25, 1974 Arthur Colby (one of the long-time leaders of the Wisconsin Council) wrote to me. He said that he doubted that the Wisconsin Council would apply for NFB affiliation. He went on to say: "In summary, you must know that I am involved with you emotionally and ideologically. I wish the Council would vote to affiliate. I cannot now leave the Wisconsin Council and the present activities that interest me. Perhaps I misread the signs; perhaps the Council will vote yes; if so, I will vote with it. This was a difficult letter for me to write. I hope you will find it less difficult to accept. I know it will have no effect on the quality of our past relationship."

I replied on September 6, 1974:

DEAR ART: As I think we both know,

the future is not with the ACB. The choice is now squarely up to the Wisconsin Council of the Blind. I hope that the choice will be wise and affirmative.

In any case, the blind of Wisconsin must be able to exercise their right to have input at the national level. They must have the opportunity to join with their fellow blind throughout the Nation to work for the betterment of their own lives—to have a voice in what happens in Washington, to work with the blind of other states to solve common problems, and to have the benefit of the total resources (both in financial and human terms) in dealing with local problems in Wisconsin.

If the Wisconsin Council does not choose to apply for affiliation, then we will organize the State with vigor, and without delay. When that time comes, each blind person and each organization of the blind in the State will be called upon to make personal decision and commitment. No blind person or organization truly interested in the welfare of the blind and the total movement will be denied admittance. For some the choice will be difficult, but the choice must be made. The day is at hand, and the blind of the State of Wisconsin will long look back to the actions of their leaders, casting up accounts and weighing in the balances the motives and deeds which shape the future. In the "casting" and "weighing" it will do the leaders no good to say, "It was not my responsibility." "I only wanted peace." "I felt we should all get together." "I did not wish to argue with my colleagues." "I did not understand." "I did not think it would be like this." "I want to be friends with everybody."

Lo! The time is at hand.

Cordially,

KENNETH JERNIGAN
President
National Federation of the Blind

Meeting November 3, 1974, the Wisconsin Council of the Blind, in a tie vote, decided not to affiliate "with any national organization of the blind." Thus, the Wisconsin Council disaffiliated and ACB lost one of its strongest affiliates. A short time later a separate organization was formed in Wisconsin as an ACB affiliate. The Wisconsin Council (with all of its money and all of its past of good and bad)

was gone.

As you will see elsewhere in this issue, we organized the National Federation of the Blind of Wisconsin in Madison, April 12, 1975. It was a good meeting and it is a good affiliate—young, enthusiastic, vigorous, and optimistic. We began with a membership of more than 145. Ed Taylor, our new affiliate president, will make a fine leader.

The future looks bright for the blind of Wisconsin, and for the Federation movement. □

HISTORIC FEDERAL COURT VICTORY IN JUDY MILLER CASE

The march of the blind toward first-class citizenship under the banner of the National Federation of the Blind crossed an historic baseline on April 21, 1975. The National Federation won a victory in the Federal Court which struck down employment discrimination in one field which will have far-reaching implications in employment and other fields. Using the 14th Amendment to the United States Constitution and the Civil Rights Acts, State and Federal, recognition of the right of the disabled to equality was obtained.

In a precedent-setting order, the National Federation of the Blind—the blind themselves—have been designated as the official and responsible group in recruitment of qualified blind employees.

Judy Miller, blind Federationist, and the NFB both State and National, brought the action. Miss Miller is an academically qualified, certificated, and experienced teacher who holds proper credentials for teaching in Colorado and who did so in another district of the State. She applied for a

teaching position in the Denver Public Schools and was turned away because she could not meet a local school district vision requirement. During the following year, Miss Miller and the NFB of Colorado worked diligently with the Denver School Board and the school administration to change their attitudes. These efforts proved fruitless and on June 28, 1973 Miss Miller and the NFB brought suit. The case was put into the very capable hands of Attorney Robert Keating of Denver.

After almost two years of memoranda, replies, answers, motions, and various orders from the Court, it seemed that the case was ready to move to trial. At that point, the defendants—the School District of Denver, the Superintendent and School Board—decided "to amicably settle and dispose of all issues and differences arising between the parties." The parties did sit down together and agree to certain conditions. Based on these stipulations, the United States District Court In and For the District of Colorado issued the following *Order, Judgment, and Decree* on April 21, 1975:

THIS MATTER coming on before the Court upon the Stipulation executed by and between the parties through their attorneys of record and dated April 17, 1975; and

The Court having examined said Stipulation and having reviewed the files herein and being familiar with this matter, does hereby approve the Stipulation; and

Doth Order, Adjudge, and Decree as follows:

1. The School District, by and through its Superintendent, shall continue to carry out and shall formalize and adopt a program of affirmatively interviewing and recruiting, through colleges and universities of the State of Colorado, blind students majoring in education and encouraging them to make application to the School District for employment upon receiving their Teachers Certificates from the State Board of Education.

2. The School District, in an effort to extend its recruitment program to certified teachers in Colorado and nationwide, will utilize the services available through the National Federation of the Blind of Colorado, Inc., its parent organization, National Federation of the Blind, Inc., and such other private and public associations and entities as may be beneficial in the recruitment of qualified blind and visually handicapped teachers.

3. The Plaintiff, National Federation of the Blind of Colorado, Inc., and on behalf of the National Federation of the Blind, Inc., will provide the School District, upon request, personnel of the Federations or membership from the Federations to aid and assist the School District in its recruiting efforts including the services of the

Teachers Division and Students Division of the Federation.

4. The School District will continue to review national studies concerning the hiring of blind and visually handicapped teachers.

5. The Vision Impairment section of the "Health Standards for Employment" promulgated in December, 1972, by the School District, shall be rewritten and promulgated in the following language:

"17. Vision Impairments—Shall not serve as a basis for denying employment, unless it is shown that the particular disability prevents the performance of the work involved."

6. The recruitment policies and program of the School District are designed and shall be affirmatively utilized to ensure that the School District shall seek the best qualified applicants for all positions of employment and will in the future treat qualified individuals who are blind or visually handicapped on the same terms and conditions as the able-bodied, unless it is shown that the particular disability prevents the performance of the work involved.

7. Nothing contained herein shall be construed to be an admission or finding that the School District presently or in the past has practiced discriminatory policies of hiring blind or visually handicapped teachers.

Dated at Denver, Colorado this 21st day of April, 1975

/s/ HATFIELD CHILSON
United States District Judge

The defendants produced all the expected arguments: That the Federal Court lacked jurisdiction since there was no denial of equal protection; that the other matters were alleged denials of rights under State law; and denied outright most of the allegations set forth in the complaints. The defendants contended that "as a matter of law, they may in their discretion impose additional requirements that teachers in Denver public schools be able to see," and said that whether the "requirement is wise is not a question for the Court." They challenged the impact on other districts in the State since the guideline attacked was limited to the Denver area but did admit that "Probably every decision made by this Court could have some effect upon the law within the State of Colorado." Indeed.

The defendants also attacked the use of the equal protection clause as attempting to "create a new and substantive right . . . under the guise of the equal protection clause, whose function is to measure the validity of classifications." However, as has been pointed out elsewhere, while classifications may be narrowly drawn to achieve a particular purpose, they do not by being underinclusive thereby achieve the reasonableness necessary to escape the requirements of equal protection, for that requirement is not limited to "reasonable classification." "Equality of minorities of race, creed, color, blood or alienage, is not so constitutionally a matter of time or place, not so dependent upon community variants peculiarly within the knowledge of the legislatures on the spot. Knowledge about civil and individual rights, unlike some economic data, is neither so technical nor so esoteric as to lie beyond the legitimate cognizance of the Court."

The defendants cited a recent United States Supreme Court case which sets forth the old standard theory of statutory construction, namely, that legislation should "bear some rational relationship to legitimate state purposes," and went on from there to reason that since the visual acuity guidelines adopted by the Denver School District are related to education, and education is a legitimate State purpose, therefore, the guidelines are valid.

To which Attorney Robert Keating replied that "the policy and guidelines as set forth in the standards do not relate to the applicant's fitness or capacity to undertake the job of teaching," and stated further that the guidelines "have no rational connection between the entrance standards for employment and the actual requirements of the job to be performed."

The outcome of this case will have an impact on the hiring of the blind in all areas of employment. It could never have happened without a strong, unified national organization acting under bold leadership, both National and State, willing to spend money and energy to gain its announced goals. This organization knows that action must follow its words.

To commemorate this victory—and to help prepare for the next—why not send a contribution to our Treasurer, Richard Edlund, P O Box 11185, Kansas City, Kansas 66111—now!

□

MORE ABOUT RAPID READING FOR THE BLIND

Editor's Note.—The article on rapid reading for the blind carried in the February 1975 issue of the Monitor has stirred up a great variety of comment and reaction. The following thoughtful letter from Winifred Downing to Bob Acosta adds perspective:

April 2, 1975

DEAR BOB: You would have no reason for remembering, but we did meet briefly at the NFB of California seminar in Oakland a little more than a week ago. It was after that that I read the letter from Ron Ocken in the *Monitor* and became aware of the plan for this coming summer. I thought you might be interested in some experiences I have had, some thoughts on the subject, and some plans for the future.

I was so interested in all that I heard about rapid reading for the blind that, in September of 1973, I wrote to Dr. McBride to ask him if there was any way that people who couldn't afford to travel across the country to Missouri or Utah could still learn something about his techniques. He answered that if I could get ten people who would be willing to pay \$150 each for the course, he would come to San Francisco at his semester break in January, 1974, to teach it. I began calling around to anyone I could think of, and by January we had all the arrangements made. We had ten people; several paid their own way; a few more were paid for by the State. Hadley paid mine (though I would have paid my own if the school hadn't), and we had two scholarships. The First Congregational Church allowed us to hold the classes there without charging any rent. The money Dr. McBride would normally have paid for rent went

toward one scholarship, with the San Francisco Chapter of the NFB of California providing the remaining \$50. The \$150 for the second scholarship I got from the Sunset Lions Club.

The class met from four to six each weekday for two weeks. Many of the participants had put in a full day of work by that time, so it probably wasn't the best arrangement; but it was the only possible one. The commitments that many of the people had outside of class also cut down on the practice time available in the evenings.

Several people in the class were teacher-counselors. Several others were people who had lost their sight in adult life. Two were blind people of not much more than high school background, who had, nevertheless, read Braille all their lives. There was, thus, no common background or degree of education among the participants. Beginning reading rates varied from 30 to 40 words a minute to rates of 150 to 200 words.

I ordered thirty or so books from the California State Library, having them equally divided between books at the elementary level, the junior high level, and simple adult reading. Dr. McBride had no list of the books and, consequently, no familiarity with what we were reading, unless he just happened to know the books.

The classes proceeded much as Mr. Ocken described. Dr. McBride told us a number of stories to illustrate that people commonly make limits for themselves which are unrealistic. Some of the stories I could readily believe. As blind persons we are all

too familiar with the business of limit-setting. Others of the stories did sound unbelievable, like the upside-down book. One of the problems of our world, though, is overselling; so I wasn't too surprised that some of the stories seemed a bit overdone.

He also talked to us about the business of the hemispheres of the brain working together and how this affects reading. He told us about the relationship between early-childhood crawling and the ability to read, and he described the movements involved. I had read a great deal about this sort of thing in connection with a reading problem one of my own children had, so I was familiar with what he was maintaining. (And speaking of overselling, there seems to be much less being written about the whole theory than there was a few years ago, though I have not seen anything to indicate that the ideas have been discredited.) He suggested we might try some of these exercises. I have never read anything to suggest whether or not it is considered possible that adult's reading can be improved by these methods. Dr. McBride also talked about developing our memories, and he gave us some exercises in this direction. He told of blind people who had participated in previous classes and of how they held their books, used their hands, et cetera.

Now, to the test of the pudding: What did we get out of the class? All of us seemed to feel we had improved in our ability to read with increased speed. None of us came anywhere near the 1200 words of some previous readers, though I myself got up to 500 words on easy material, some of which was a second reading. I still use the techniques I developed, and at least one of the other students is also using hers.

I agree with Mr. Ocken that there should be more exact ways of testing comprehension, greater standardization of material and judgment about its difficulty, measurable points of advancement, and far less dramatic claims for what can be achieved. I do feel, though, that there are things that come out of the class for many of us that have helped. We do proceed too slowly in turning pages, becoming situated on the first line of the new page, and returning to the beginning of a line. We do not utilize all the finger space we can. Many people are content with just one hand and I myself thought I could read just with the first fingers of each hand; whereas I found I could read with my second fingers and have worked hard further to develop their capability. People found that their rates did vary according to how they held their books—on their laps, on pillows, on tables, et cetera. We did find that our ability to concentrate and to remember could be influenced. I don't think there is any magic formula in all of this and it is completely possible that we could have accomplished these same things on our own. The fact is, though, that we didn't, even though we were all long-time users of Braille.

Dr. McBride told us about Nancy Steinhauser, the girl with whom he had done the first experiment in Braille rapid reading. I have intended to write to her, but she was away at school at that time, and I just never did get the letter sent to her when summertime came around. He also told us about a gal who found she could read with the palms of her hands, thus contacting much more material and, of course, speeding up her reading immeasurably. That woman was Dorothy Petrucci, the principal of the Iowa Braille and Sight Saving School. She had been a student of

mine in Grade III Braille, and I knew her to be a person of intellectual ability; so I telephoned her. She said that she did indeed use her palms. She said that the friction of the dots against her hands aggravated an allergy she already had to such an extent that there were actually blood spots on the pages so she hasn't been able to continue with that method. The thing is, though, that we really aren't as limited in reading area as we have heretofore thought we were.

Now, did we make our improvement just because we were persuaded by a kind of brainwashing that we should? Did we improve because we stimulated each other? Did we substitute some skimming over rather unimportant material and learn rather to bear down occasionally on what was vital? I really don't know the answers; and I do think a lot of work needs to be done to establish just what improvements can be made and how they can be brought about. What you contend is certainly true: We need increased emphasis on the possibilities of Braille, and we aren't getting any help in this direction anywhere else. All the work that has been done in recent years on the OPTACON shows just how much room there is for more work with tactile skills. I am amazed at myself in that I do read easily on the OPTACON after training with the first finger of my left hand and can't recognize a single letter with the first finger of my right. If my one finger can be educated to this extent in this new technique, I must certainly believe that my other fingers can be educated, too, to do things they haven't been doing—including reading of Braille.

One thing Mr. Ocken says is false, for Dr. McBride has composed a text for the correspondence teaching of rapid Braille

reading; and Hadley intends at least to get that course going within the next three months. I am going to be teaching it, for I am a full-time employee with the school, though living in San Francisco. In my own teaching, I won't make the kind of promises or suggestions for speed that Dr. McBride does, but I will say the things I learned about myself and I intend to do all the studying I can on ways that have been used to speed the recognition of individual Braille characters, stimulating the use of both hands in reading, and so on. If people are helped by these suggestions, the whole effort will certainly be worth the time and trouble, whether they improve from 20 to 40 words per minute or from 100 to 200 or 200 to 400. Our mistake lies, I think, in relying on those spectacular increases.

There are a lot of things I think Dr. McBride might do to make his services more valuable as a teacher for the blind. He might learn Braille, for example, and he might become familiar with all the teaching techniques that have thus far been tried, and how they have or haven't succeeded. But, then, we should really be doing these things, too. We all realize that Braille is on the way out unless we can interest more people in it and push its limits farther. The sighted people who are largely the teachers of blind children just aren't convinced enough of its possibilities to be insistent about it.

One thing that I really liked about our class: It was an effort completely supported and worked out by blind people to gain an opportunity for ourselves that we really wanted.

One more thing that I didn't mention: I don't know if it is maintained by teachers

of rapid reading for the sighted that the technique can be applied to all reading material. I do think Dr. McBride maintains that. I find, though, that there are things I can't read that way. I can't read poetry that way, proofread Braille, study some-

thing very detailed, do spiritual or philosophical reading. But, enough!

Sincerely,

WINIFRED DOWNING □

PRESIDENTIAL RELEASES ON CASSETTE

March 6, 1975

DEAR PRESIDENT JERNIGAN: I do enjoy all the material that you send out and also the *Braille Monitor*. I do wish that our new chapter president would play the cassettes which you send out about ten times a year. But he listens to them and does not bring them to us. I call the State president about this and she said that we should have them. I asked about the release at our last meeting and the chapter president said that there was not too much in it except about the candy and, of course, again he did not bring it. If you send material to the State president, you might include this letter to her and if she could send a letter to the chapter president emphasizing this, he might take the hint and bring the release to us. I would appreciate hearing from you on this matter.

Yours very truly,

CHAPTER MEMBER

Des Moines, Iowa, March 19, 1975

DEAR MRS. BLANK: No local chapter president has the right to withhold the cassette Presidential Releases from the chapter members. No local president has the right to decide for the members whether the releases contain material worth hearing. Blind people are capable of deciding for themselves, and any communication which the National or State President thinks important enough to be sent to the members should not be withheld from them. It is up to the members to insist upon their rights.

Cordially,

KENNETH JERNIGAN

President

National Federation of the Blind

□

NFB OFFERS VIEWS AT HEARINGS ON LIBRARY APPROPRIATIONS

BY

JAMES GASHEL

Editor's Note.—Mr. Gashel, Chief of the NFB Washington Office, appeared on behalf of the National Federation of the Blind, before the Subcommittee on Legislative

Appropriations of the Senate Committee on Appropriations which was considering the requests of the Library of Congress, Division for the Blind and Physically Handicapped

for Fiscal Year 1976, on April 23, 1975. His testimony is here set out in full.

As you know, we are a membership organization open to all blind persons in the United States. Currently our membership numbers fifty thousand. In our capacity as the blind speaking for themselves, we carry on a number of wide-ranging activities. To provide vital information to the blind, we publish a monthly magazine (*the Braille Monitor*), which is produced in inkprint, in Braille, and on talking-book discs. We distribute the *Monitor* free to the blind and to regional libraries. We are here today, Mr. Chairman, to talk with the Committee about library services for the blind, and especially those provided by the Library of Congress, Division for the Blind and Physically Handicapped.

You have under consideration appropriations for this program for fiscal year 1976 in the amount of \$15,941,000. We endorse this request, and we urge that the total amount be appropriated. On the face of it, this request appears to be a very substantial increase. But, Mr. Chairman, if these funds are granted the Library will be able to provide service to its four hundred and eighty thousand borrowers roughly at the level they now enjoy. If you then compare the level of service available through the books for the blind and physically handicapped program with that which is provided by even the average public library, the Division's request is certainly justified. A library, designated to meet the reading needs of the sighted public, and having approximately the same number of borrowers, would normally add ten times as many books to its collection as the Division will be able to acquire with current funding. This is important to bear in mind.

I will not take your time to review the entire budget proposal, since you have already had it presented to you, but I would like to make some comments concerning specific items. In doing this, I would like to ask you to think in terms of priorities and to consider seriously making some adjustments.

Within the past couple of years, the Division for the Blind and Physically Handicapped hit upon the plan of developing four regional centers to serve as backups for the regular regional libraries, which are already part of the system. These centers (called multistate centers) were to assist the regional libraries in providing better service to their patrons. Two multistate centers (one in Utah and one in Florida) have been established. The Library has requested \$100,000 to operate these two centers during fiscal year 1976—\$50,000 to each. Consistent with our philosophy of providing the maximum number and variety of books to meet the reading needs of borrowers, we oppose the establishment and further development of multistate centers, and we ask that these funds be reallocated. We have arrived at this position after careful thought. It is based solely on practical considerations—we do not believe the concept of multistate centers has worked. Readers in the states now served by the multistate centers are receiving no better or faster service than they were before the advent of this program. Our contacts in the field indicate that several librarians have been disappointed to find that the multistate centers have not enabled them to offer higher quality service to the readers.

As we see it, the flaw in the concept of multistate centers cannot be removed by additional appropriations. Doubling the

amount of funding which each center is receiving would not, in our judgment, be an effective or efficient use of resources. We are convinced that further development of the multistate centers will result in high costs and low benefits. In most parts of the country, blind and physically handicapped library users have a clear recourse if they wish to improve their program. The regional library which serves them is established and funded by the state legislature. Their elected representatives have an interest in its operation. Their regional librarian has the potential ability to respond directly to the requests for service from the readers. Not so under the multistate center concept. The blind of South Carolina, served by the regional library in that State, have now lost this direct access to the potential decision-making process controlling their library service. Nowadays they are, in part at least, dependent on the quality, responsiveness, and goodwill, of the Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped located in Daytona Beach, Florida. This library (the library in Florida) functions as the multistate center serving South Carolina, Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Tennessee, North Carolina, Texas, Virginia, the Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico.

The problem is really self-evident. The blind people of South Carolina, the library in South Carolina, the Legislature of South Carolina, and the Governor of South Carolina, all have little, if any, drag on the Florida library, which has been established, staffed, and operated to serve the blind and physically handicapped persons in Florida. Even so, the library in South Carolina must now compete with thirteen other regional libraries, all making demands on the multistate center associated with the library for the blind in Florida. This can

only compound the problem, and no amount of additional funds can solve it. Mr. Chairman, we would like to take this opportunity to urge this Committee to review the entire concept of multistate centers and to consider appropriate revisions which might be made.

Moving to another area for a moment, we wish to draw your attention to the Library's request for \$267,000 to continue the development work on an automated cataloging and bibliographic control system. We applaud this effort, and we are anxious to see this new system fully operational. It is not possible at this time for us to comment on its effectiveness, but we feel that the potential is great. This endeavor to bring library services for the blind into the 20th century through a computerized network has the possibility of substantially reducing the delays which are now an expected part of getting the books one wants in the form desired and in the time required.

For research and development projects, the Division has requested \$197,000. According to its proposal, a portion of these funds will be used to study various methods of applying modern technology to the production and distribution of Braille books and materials. We support this effort. Other funds will support various reader surveys to determine what steps the Division might take to more adequately meet the needs of those who now use the service and of those who are potential users. We endorse these projects, Mr. Chairman.

One of the R and D projects distresses us deeply and we ask that you give it special examination. During fiscal year 1976, the Library intends to field test a projection device usable only by the physically handi-

capped who are not, themselves, blind. We vigorously oppose continued funding of this project. We realize that it was planned and initiated under a different administration at the Division and we can appreciate some commitment to a program once it has been under way. But this should not be used to justify continued appropriations. We seriously believe that a reallocation of these monies would be to the real advantage of all library users—both the blind and physically handicapped.

Mr. Chairman, all of us have been around long enough to know that once the wheels of a new program begin to roll, they tend to generate their own momentum. Especially this is true during annual appropriations time. Under the guise of research, many unworthy endeavors have been extended indefinitely. This, of course, is to the long-range disadvantage of all concerned. The history books tell us that Samuel Morse successfully resisted the temptation to throw good money after bad by literally destroying a very complicated and very expensive machine developed for the purpose of burying transmission cables. As a result of this single act, the telegraph pole came into being, and wires were quickly strung nationwide. In his refusal to pursue an earlier plan, Morse exhibited flexibility and wisdom, and he probably advanced the whole communications industry by decades. In the future, we might want to refer to the principle which Morse applied in this case as the Morse Doctrine. Not a bad doctrine at all when examining appropriations requests in order to determine priorities for limited resources.

This is a good time for me to express our continuing concern that the books for the blind and physically handicapped program, originally established by the Congress

to assist the blind, must continue to serve the blind at a high level. In our judgment, any de-emphasis of the Division's original purpose would severely impair already limited library services to the blind. At its 1972 Annual Convention the National Federation of the Blind unanimously adopted a resolution which speaks to this point. I am attaching a copy of the resolution, and I ask that it be printed in the record.

Now I want to direct your attention to the Library's request for appropriations to produce and distribute books in Braille. During fiscal year 1976 the Division intends to add three hundred titles to the Braille collection and circulate thirty magazines in Braille. According to the Library, this will require an expenditure of \$1,292,700. This proposal, in our opinion, is inadequate. In fact, when set alongside the other major budget items (especially sound recordings and sound reproducers) this plan for a "hold-the-line" budget for Braille represents the continuation of a trend which we vigorously oppose. At its 1974 Convention, the National Federation of the Blind considered various issues related to library services. Repeatedly, the theme was sounded that every effort must be made to preserve Braille as a necessary method of reading. For several years we have felt that the Library of Congress has gone along with some others in de-emphasizing the production and distribution of books in Braille in favor of sound recordings. The official position of the National Federation of the Blind is contained in our Resolution 74-10, and I ask that it be printed in the record as an attachment to this statement.

This resolution makes clear our strong opposition to any plans which would further widen the gap between Braille production and production of books in other

forms. It affirms our deep desire to increase, wherever and whenever possible, the production and distribution of books and other materials in Braille. Even a glance at the Division's requested appropriations for fiscal year 1976 reveals the continued de-emphasis of Braille in favor of sound recordings.

Usually the reasons for cutting Braille are couched in statistics which show that the largest portion of readers who borrow books from the Division do most of their reading through records and tapes. We contend, on the other hand, that this system has built-in biases, so that the statistics do not portray an accurate picture. When selecting books from the Library, you often have to take what you can get, which may not be what you want or need. If you need to have Machiavelli's *The Prince*, you can't get it from the Division in Braille. They have it on tape only. If you need the book for extensive study or if you want to extract quotations from it, it is better not to borrow the copy from the Division, but to get a sighted person to read it. The cassette tape is not always an effective way for a person to work with a book. Important, then, among the factors which are pulling in the direction of fewer Braille titles, is a more limited selection. But this more limited selection of titles is, itself, often justified on the basis that there are fewer Braille borrowers. What we have here is a nice piece of circular reasoning, which if carried to its logical extreme would mean zero Braille books for zero Braille borrowers.

As we see it, Mr. Chairman, the time has now arrived for the Congress to express its vigorous support for the production and distribution of books in Braille for the blind. There is no more direct way to do

this than through the process of appropriations. There is no better or more fitting time to do this than now. 1975 is being celebrated world wide as the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of Braille. What a great tribute it would be if the United States would mark this occasion by rededicating its energies to expanding production of Braille books, rather than continuing to preside over the decline of this method of reading for the blind. There are those who have attempted to argue that Braille is inferior to other reading techniques, but, Mr. Chairman, they are wrong. Literally thousands of blind persons depend heavily on it every day to carry on their jobs, to be productive, and to meet their responsibilities. As you see, I do, myself. To us, being without Braille is tantamount to functional illiteracy. For many of us, having books readily available is not merely a matter of preference—it is a necessity. Certain materials do not lend themselves to sound recordings—they are only usable in Braille. This includes some of the world's best literature as well as technical works.

Accordingly, we request this Committee to allocate additional funding to this category of the Library's budget. Specifically, we are asking that sufficient monies be appropriated so that the Division can produce and distribute four hundred new titles and thirty magazines during fiscal year 1976. We estimate that this increase of one hundred Braille titles over the Library's request will cost approximately \$150,000. This would make the total amount to be budgeted for Braille \$1,442,700. Mr. Chairman, we look upon this as a modest request, and especially so when reviewing the trend over the past couple of years. Placed alongside the other items in the Library's budget request, this rather small increase is certainly in keeping with the

Division's valiant efforts to expand and improve its services. If our request is approved, Braille production will keep pace with other programs. If it is not, then Braille will continue to lag further and further behind. Other major items in the Library's budget proposal include sound recordings and sound reproducers. We believe that these requests are sensible, reasonable, and realistic. We strongly urge you to act affirmatively on them. If these funds are allocated, the Division for the Blind and Physically Handicapped will be able to produce one thousand titles and twenty-six magazines and provide the necessary machines to play them. No less than Braille, this phase of the Library's program is an important one. The Division's initiatives to provide a meaningful service in this area have our full endorsement. If the requested funds are approved, the Library will be able to make a modest, but sorely needed, expansion in its programs. It will still not keep pace, though, with libraries of comparable size designed to meet the reading needs of sighted patrons. Of course, this cannot be changed overnight, and we do not expect that, but we do urge your continued commitment to bring about a program which can grow to a stage of equality.

Mr. Chairman, I want to take this occasion to commend you and the members of this Committee for your consistent and generous support of this important program for the nation's blind and physically handicapped. As we have taken this look with you at the Division's budget request for fiscal year 1976, it has been our hope that we might assist you in determining priorities. The overall thrust of our analysis supports the Library's request. We do, of course, hope that some adjustments and reallocations will be made as we have sug-

gested.

Four hundred and eighty thousand blind and physically handicapped citizens now take advantage of this program, and the value they receive from it cannot be measured in dollars and cents alone. Library services, for anyone (blind or sighted) are an absolute necessity. Even so, sighted persons have an almost unlimited access to reading matter through newspapers, bookstores, book-of-the-month clubs, and the like. Most of this is not available to the blind. We must depend on a single source—the Division for the Blind and Physically Handicapped and its network of cooperating regional libraries.

Without this necessary and unique service, many of us would find ourselves literally cut off from the vital information and education (not to mention just plain entertainment) presented in the world of books. Of course, most of us are able to secure some regular assistance in reading printed material, but this is usually limited to our daily mail and business correspondence. It is quite another matter altogether to find someone who has the time (let alone the inclination) to read aloud a newspaper, a popular magazine, or a best selling book. We cannot over-emphasize the personal significance of this program for the young and the old, the student and the teacher, the employed professional and the retired senior citizen. All of these, and many more, depend on the books for the blind and physically handicapped program.

Mr. Chairman, I want to conclude this statement by pointing out that a bedrock principle of the Federation's thinking about blindness and the blind is that persons without sight are innately normal human beings. Applying this principle to library

services, we believe that people who are blind ought to have available to them library services which are at least as good as that which they could get if they were sighted and lived in a good library area. Only in this way will blind people have the necessary resources at hand to compete totally on terms of equality with their sighted colleagues. Today, this philosophy is still a dream—a goal to be reached. In the future, it could become a reality, but it will not happen this year or even next. Nonetheless, all of us must set our sights on the goal and do what we can to achieve it. Only in this way, Mr. Chairman, will the blind of this country be well served.

**NATIONAL FEDERATION OF
THE BLIND
RESOLUTION 72-03**

WHEREAS, the number of titles available to blind readers is grossly inadequate; and

WHEREAS, only a small percentage of new print titles produced each year are available to the blind; and

WHEREAS, the projected plan of the Library of Congress, Division of the Blind and Physically Handicapped, will be to divert funds from producing titles usable by blind people to producing titles in a form appropriate only to those who can see; and

WHEREAS, the recorded media are appropriate equally for the blind and the seeing; and

WHEREAS, this projection would diminish and denigrate library service for the blind, thus exacerbating a problem which is already severe; and

WHEREAS, the National Federation of the Blind supported the inclusion of the physically handicapped in the library services for the blind only in reliance upon the repeated and vehement denials by the Library of Congress that such inclusion would be in no way detrimental to services for the blind; and

WHEREAS, though the Federation endorses and supports the sharing of library materials produced for blind readers with all those who cannot read conventional print, we must oppose any policy which will divert funds away from library services for the blind; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the National Federation of the Blind in Convention assembled in the City of Chicago, Illinois, this 6th day of July, 1972, that this organization calls upon the Library of Congress to abandon all schemes, policies and projections having the effect of producing titles which would be unusable by blind readers.

Adopted

**NATIONAL FEDERATION OF
THE BLIND
RESOLUTIONS**

**ADOPTED BY THE THIRTY-FOURTH
ANNUAL CONVENTION
*City of Chicago, July 1974***

RESOLUTION 74-10

WHEREAS the members of the NFB believe that the blind of this country should receive the best possible governmental services through those programs designated to serve them including the Library of Congress, Division for the Blind and Physically

Handicapped; and

WHEREAS the Library of Congress, Division for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, is responsible for providing literature and other reading materials to the blind; and

WHEREAS it is becoming increasingly apparent that Braille literature and reading materials provided by the Library of Congress, Division for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, may be severely limited or reduced due to increased production and distribution costs; and

WHEREAS such a reduction of Braille services constitutes a serious infringement upon the rights of our Braille reading blind; and

WHEREAS the Library of Congress, Division for the Blind and Physically Handicapped is considering the practice of publishing Talking Books Topics in Braille; and

WHEREAS Mr. Frank Kurt Cylke, newly appointed Chief of the Division for the Blind and the Physically Handicapped, already has demonstrated his belief in providing top quality library services for

the blind making it clear that he is sympathetic to our wants and needs; and

WHEREAS the new Chief has not had time to review all of the issues respecting the use of Braille: Now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the National Federation of the Blind in Convention assembled this 2nd day of July, 1974, in the City of Chicago, Illinois, that this organization strongly oppose the reduction or limitation of Braille literature and reading materials provided for the blind by the Library of Congress, Division for the Blind and Physically Handicapped; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the NFB strongly urge the Library of Congress, Division for the Blind and Physically Handicapped to review its policy to the end that Talking Book Topics will again be produced in Braille; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the officers of this organization be instructed to work with the Library of Congress, Division for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, to ensure that the blind of this country will receive improved and expanded Braille services. □

PRESIDENT JERNIGAN RECEIVES ANOTHER DEGREE

In impressive ceremonies, President Jernigan was awarded yet another honorary degree—this time a Doctor of Humanities by Drake University. The degree is tendered to “outstanding individuals and leaders” to symbolize their achievement. The University Senate and the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees, in the words of Drake University President Wilbur C. Miller, “have endorsed this action with enthusiasm, and I am pleased to be their agent in

expressing their hope that you can be with us to accept this award.”

This is the third such academic honor our President has received. In 1974 he was awarded an honorary Doctor of Laws by Seton Hall University (New Jersey), and an honorary Doctor of Humanities by Coe College (Iowa) in 1968. President Jernigan has, of course, been the recipient of many other awards and honors for his leadership

and work in the field of rehabilitation and in the general humanities. As he continues

his great work, the list will undoubtedly grow even longer. □

WHERE SHOULD THE EMPHASIS BE: NATIONAL, STATE, OR LOCAL

BY

KENNETH JERNIGAN

Recently I received a copy of a letter from a chapter president to one of the leaders of the Federation in her state. I think the question raised in the letter is basic, not only to an understanding of our movement but to its very existence as an effective force.

March 19, 1975

DEAR BLANK: At the seminar held on Saturday, I heard many speakers, including yourself, who were very informative and furnished much information that I could bring back to my chapter.

However, I was a little disturbed at the direction you have taken in informing the chapters that the first priority in allegiance is to the National Federation. I disagree with this and wish to explain why.

Each chapter should know their local members and their needs. We here in our town address ourselves to each individual, blind, sick and disabled who need special attention and care. The needs are great. I will not go into specific details about all there is to do for our blind locally.

We are a chapter of the National Federation with pride and we will support the National Federation in every way we can. If at any time, you come to our town for fund raising, we will not expect any funds to come to our chapter and will help you to the fullest extent. Our relationship with

the local government is good and I know that they will help and give cooperation in any way possible.

We acknowledge and are grateful to the National Federation for their excellent work in the legislature and the marvelous work being done by the lobbyists in Washington and our State Capital. Again I will reiterate that I feel our priorities are to our local people in our midst who need personal services, our loyalty and concern.

In the beginning of our organization, we were never properly informed as to what National Federation is or as to what their function is. All information was gained through our own efforts. It was not given without inquiry on our part and we were completely and totally left groping.

We have a special problem here where the local agency for the blind maintains a center and a paid public relations man. We cannot combat this kind of publicity due to lack of funds. However, we are in a small way doing all we can in publicity with radio and T.V. programs, presenting our blind and National Federation to the public locally and informing the sighted world of what the blind are doing.

We maintain a special listing in the telephone directory for the National Federation of our State and so I believe that our chapter is doing its part in the overall

picture.

You will remember that I suggested that the National Federation maintain a national public speaking bureau, maintained by each state, where at least once or twice a year, a speaker will be sent to each chapter, informing them of the accomplishments and of any programs planned for the future.

We certainly do not expect our State president to do this personally but we do feel that more cooperation should be given to the chapters in an advisory capacity. We gratefully appreciate what our neighboring chapter president has been doing by coming to our meetings and speaking on the National Federation.

In conclusion, I will reiterate that our concern will be locally first and nationally second.

I would appreciate hearing from you as to your opinion on my views.

Sincerely yours,

President, (local chapter)

Des Moines, Iowa, April 2, 1975

DEAR MRS. BLANK: I have your letter to [blank], and I hope you will not mind if I comment on it. I agree with you wholeheartedly that your prime concern must be for your local members. This is exactly why your prime allegiance should be to the National Federation of the Blind. Does this sound like a riddle or a paradox? Not at all.

If you are really concerned (and I am sure that you are) with the welfare of blind people in your immediate area, you will be concerned with the National Federation of the Blind as a total movement throughout the country. Your letter implies that the National Federation of the Blind is all of the other chapters but that it is not you or your local members. In truth and in fact, every time your local chapter meets, we have had a meeting of the National Federation of the Blind. Your letter also implies that the prime activity of the National Federation of the Blind (at least, at the national and state levels) is "lobbying." This is simply not the way it is. Dealing with legislation is a relatively small part of what the Federation is doing.

If your local chapter is not the National Federation of the Blind, then my local chapter isn't either. I agree that the National Federation of the Blind should have a speakers' bureau to inform the members. Since you are as much the National Federation of the Blind as I am every time you speak to your local chapter you are participating in the speakers' bureau. If you find the time to speak to another local chapter, so much the better.

It is hard to get people to see that the Federation is a single movement, one and indivisible. There is no "they." There is only "we." We are the Federation. In my own case, for instance, how can I say that my prime allegiance is to Des Moines, not to Iowa or the United States of America. There is no Des Moines which is separate from Iowa, and there is no Iowa which is separate from the United States. There is no conflict in being loyal to my city and my state and America all at the same time. In fact, there would be conflict in doing it

any other way. How can I be more loyal to Des Moines than I am to America?

You say that, when your chapter was established, you were not thoroughly informed about the organization you were joining—that is, about the National Federation of the Blind. By now, (although I am not sure in view of the statements made in your letter) I would assume you have not only received but also read and digested some of the basic Federation literature. I am taking the liberty of sending you three records: "Why the National Federation of the Blind," "Local Organizations of the Blind—How to Build and Strengthen Them," and "Why I Am a Federationist." If you have not already done so, I hope that you will read them in the order listed, and I hope that you will not just read but study them. They set forth as well as I am able the concepts underlying our movement.

When I say *our*, I mean your movement as well as mine.

Far from being disturbed by your letter, I was pleased that you would share it with me. I hope that what I have said (coupled with the records I am sending) will make sense. Whether it does or not, I would appreciate your reactions. You are a respected and valued member of the Federation, about whom I have heard a great many good and complimentary things. The tone and substance of your letter confirm what I have heard. I thank you for sharing it with me.

Cordially,

KENNETH JERNIGAN
President
National Federation of the Blind

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REPORT OF THE CONFERENCE OF BLIND VENDORS
BY
ARTHUR SEGAL

Editor's Note.—Arthur Segal is president of the Philadelphia Blind Merchants Guild and the Pennsylvania Blind Merchants Guild. He is the official representative of the Alumni Association on the Board of Managers of Overbrook School for the Blind, chairman of the Governor's Advisory Committee on the Blind, and a charter member of the Liberty Alliance of the Blind, a chapter of the Pennsylvania Federation of the Blind, NFB. He is also chairman of the Council of Agencies and Organizations of and for the Blind of Delaware Valley which represents about forty different groups in the area. He is, of course, a vending facility operator and his business is located

in the City Hall. Mr. Segal is a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania and holds both a bachelor's and a master's degree in special education from that institution. He and his wife, Shirley, like to entertain—and Arthur does the cooking.

Adoption by the Congress of the Randolph-Sheppard Act Amendments of 1974 (Public Law 93-516) has introduced a new era in the blind vendor program. If properly understood, implemented, and administered, the new provisions should mean more and better locations, a greater role for operators as actual participants in the management of their own business

affairs, and a new image designed to promote a wide variety of employment opportunities for all blind people.

With the aim of informing blind vendors of the potentials and ramifications of the new law, and for the purpose of developing recommendations on some of the implementation issues facing responsible Federal officials, the Philadelphia Blind Merchants Guild and the Pennsylvania Blind Merchants Guild jointly sponsored a two day workshop in Philadelphia, March 22-23, 1975. Nearly one hundred people from approximately fifteen states attended and participated in the conference. John Taylor, Assistant Director in Charge of Field Operations, Iowa Commission for the Blind and James Gashel, Chief of the Washington Office, National Federation of the Blind, assisted in planning, coordinating, and conducting the meeting. Henry Seward, representing the Office for the Blind and Visually Handicapped of the Rehabilitation Services Administration, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, spoke briefly and responded to questions from the audience. The substantial contributions made by each of these individuals were appreciated.

IMPLEMENTATION, ISSUES, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Representative Committee of Blind Vendors

Section 209 of Public Law 93-516 sets forth certain additional state responsibilities, including the requirement that the state licensing agency shall "conduct a biennial election of a Committee of Blind Vendors who shall be fully representative of all blind licensees in the state program." Also, the state licensing agency must insure that the Committee's responsibilities include (a) participation with the state agency in

major administrative decisions and policy program development, (b) receiving grievances of blind licensees and serving as advocates for such licensees, (c) participation, with the state agency, in the development and administration of a transfer and promotion system for blind licensees, (d) participation, with the state agency, in developing training and retraining programs, and (e) sponsorship, with the assistance of the state agency, of meetings and instructional conferences for blind licensees.

A. Elections, Organization, and Structure

Issues: Legal responsibility for "conducting" a biennial election of the representative Committee of Blind Vendors is fixed with the state licensing agency. Various alternative methods for conducting such elections were discussed. The new Act specifies that the Committee of Blind Vendors shall be "fully representative" of all blind licensees in the program. Conference participants considered several suggestions for compliance with this provision, including designating one representative on the committee for each twenty-five operators, setting a minimum number of committee members, and breaking up the state into districts with each having a representative on the committee.

Recommendations: The Conference recommends that each state licensing agency call a meeting of all vendors in the program for the purpose of electing and organizing the Committee of Blind Vendors. Operators should be given at least thirty days notice of the time and place of such meeting. At the organizational meeting, all questions regarding the organization, structure, and functioning of the committee should be discussed and reconciled, and the decisions of the group should be

put in writing and distributed to all licensees.

The Conference recommends that, whenever possible, there should be no less than five members on the statewide committee. In those states with less than five vending facilities, all operators in the program should serve on the committee. In those states with more than five operators, the exact number of members of the committee should be designated by the operators at the organizing meeting. The issue of whether or not to organize a system of district representatives should be left to the discretion of the operators in each state, but this was seen as a viable option for larger states.

The Conference recommends that all meetings of the Committee of Blind Vendors be open and that minutes of the meetings be available on request. There should be at least one meeting of the committee during each year with other regular or special meetings scheduled according to procedures established at the organizing meeting. The reasonable expenses of committee members should be paid according to procedures determined jointly by the committee and the state licensing agency.

The Conference recommends that, in order to comply with the legal requirements of being fully representative, all vendors in the state's vending facility program must be eligible to serve on the Committee of Blind Vendors. Paying dues to any organized body of blind licensees shall not be a prerequisite for participation on the committee. Federal Regulations must insure that all vendors shall have an equal opportunity to participate in the establishment and functioning of the Com-

mittee of Blind Vendors.

B. Duties and Responsibilities

Issues: Section 209 of Public Law 93-516 lists five specific responsibilities for the Committee of Blind Vendors. This list, together with the language in Section 209, makes clear that the committee is not merely advisory in nature. Recognizing that the committee's statutory responsibilities extend to a partnership with the state licensing agency, the central issues to be addressed concern the necessary information available to the committee and the methods implementing the committee's participating role with the state agency.

Recommendations: The Conference recommends that to insure that the committee shall fulfill its statutory responsibilities to participate with the state agency in all major administrative decisions and policy and program development, the agency shall review with the committee all of its rules and regulations prior to promulgation, the format and content of the agreement between the agency and blind licensees, the accounting system, all reports and forms used in the program, and all other policy issuances. It is the responsibility of the committee to participate in the development of rules, regulations, and procedures. The review process called for in this recommendation must be made in a manner consistent with the principle that the operators' committee shall, by law, play a participatory role in administrative decision making and policy formulation.

RELEVANT FINANCIAL DATA

Section 209 of Public Law 93-516 provides that "in addition to other require-

ments imposed in this title . . . upon state licensing agencies, such agencies shall - (1) provide to each blind licensee access to all relevant financial data, including quarterly and annual financial reports, on the operation of the state vending facility program."

A. All Relevant Financial Data

Issues: Participants at the Conference expressed the view that appropriate regulations should be promulgated which will define the minimum requirements of the phrase "all relevant financial data." The Act specifies quarterly and annual financial reports, but it does not limit this requirement to these documents. The question arises, what (at a minimum) are the types of data which must be accessible, and what policies are appropriate with respect to maintaining confidentiality for individual blind licensees? The view was expressed that there should be some understanding of the arrangements to be made to insure accessibility to financial data. It was generally recognized that collection and distribution of this type of information could be costly to the operators, themselves, especially where set-aside funds largely support the vending facility program. It was also felt that appropriate and meaningful financial information rightfully belongs to the operators and must be readily available.

Recommendations: The Conference recommends that the following information be deemed to constitute the minimum requirements for "all relevant financial data:" (1) **Receipts:** The total amount of monies received by the state licensing agency (or, where appropriate, its nominee agency) in connection with the vending facility program must be shown. Receipts should be broken down by category, i.e.,

income from set aside, income from state appropriation, income from Federal matching funds, income from vending machines, and other income. (2) **Expenditures:** The total disbursement of all receipts must be shown. Expenditures should be broken down by category, i.e., maintenance of equipment, replacement of equipment, new equipment, management services, guaranteed minimum return, and (where applicable) retirement program, paid sick leave, vacation time, and health insurance contributions. The average cost of renovating existing vending facilities and the average cost of developing new vending facilities should also be presented in the financial statements.

The Conference recommends that as a matter of routine procedure, the Committee of Blind Vendors be supplied with the above information. It was further recommended that all vendors be provided such data upon request, and that it be readily available to them. Concern was expressed that reams of statistical comparison and reports not be compiled as a regular practice, since such procedures could be extremely costly to the operators themselves.

ASSIGNMENT OF VENDING MACHINE INCOME

A. Ceiling on Assigned Vending Machine Income

Issues: Section 7(a) of the Randolph-Sheppard Act provides that the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration may prescribe regulations imposing a ceiling on the amount of vending machine income which may accrue to a blind person from vending machines which he does not operate, service, or maintain.

The Conference considered various points of view on this provision, recognizing the concern of some that very substantial amounts of vending machine income would accrue to some individuals by virtue of their location in a particular facility. On the other hand, it was agreed that vending machines often substantially compete with vending facilities, keeping the earnings of the blind operator much lower than they would be otherwise.

Recommendations: The Conference recommends that the Commissioner prescribe no regulations which impose a ceiling on the amount of vending machine income which may accrue to a blind vending facility operator.

B. Exempt Vending Machine Income

Section 7(d) of the Randolph-Sheppard Act provides that "subsections (a) and (b) (1) of this section shall not apply . . . to income from vending machines not in direct competition with a blind vending facility at individual locations, installations or facilities on Federal property the total of which at such individual locations, installations, or facilities does not exceed three thousand dollars annually."

Issues: The overwhelming concern of blind vendors is with the exact meaning of the phrase "individual locations, installations, or facilities." Implementing this language will determine substantially the amount of vending machine income which will be received by blind licensees. The 1974 Amendments to the Randolph-Sheppard Act provide that "in authorizing the operation of vending facilities on Federal property, priority shall be given to blind persons licensed by a state agency as provided in this Act; . . . (1) The priority

under this subsection is given to such licensed blind persons (including assignment of vending machine income pursuant to Section 7 of this Act to achieve and protect such priority)." In order to administer the assignment of vending machine income in accordance with the priorities established by the Congress, the phrase "individual locations, installations, or facilities" must not be interpreted in a narrow sense. The Conference believes that Congressional intent to assign substantially greater portions of vending machine income to blind persons would be circumvented if Federal Regulations permit maneuvering so as to limit the vending machine income received to less than three thousand dollars annually.

Recommendations: The Conference recommends that, in promulgating regulations, responsible Federal officials make a special effort to avoid narrow interpretation of the phrase "individual locations, installations, or facilities." The Conference believes that Congressional intent can best be carried out if this phrase is understood to mean "the contiguous property under the control of the agency, department, or instrumentality of the United States." Restricting "individual locations, installations, or facilities" to a single vending machine (or a single bank of vending machines) would permit Federal agencies and employee groups the latitude to establish vending facilities which would earn less than three thousand dollars annually. The concept of "contiguous property," which the Conference recommends, is in keeping with the desire of the Congress to assure blind persons increased opportunity for earnings through more equitable assignment of vending machine income.

C. Disbursement of Vending Machine In-

come by Federal Agencies

Section 7 (b) (1) of the Randolph-Sheppard Act establishes percentages of vending machine income which are to be assigned to blind vendors (or state licensing agencies) if the vending machines are not in direct competition with a blind vending facility. The percentages designated are fifty percent or thirty percent, depending on the number of hours worked on the premises during periods other than normal working hours. Section 7(b)(2) states, "the head of each department, agency, or instrumentality of the United States shall insure compliance with this section with respect to buildings, installations, and facilities under his control, and shall be responsible for collection of, and accounting for, such vending machine income."

Issues: The dominant issues involved in implementation of this section concern the availability of records and supporting documents upon which the assignment of vending machine income to blind licensees (or to state agencies) is based. Since, in applying the provisions of Section 7(b)(1) to individual situations, controversies may arise, concern was expressed that full information which documents the assignment of vending machine income be maintained and made readily available to blind vendors and state licensing agencies.

Recommendations: The Conference recommends that regulations be promulgated which require the head of each department, agency, or instrumentality of the United States to make available, upon request of the appropriate state licensing agency or blind vendor affected, all data upon which the determination regarding the assignment of vending machine income is based.

SET-ASIDE FUNDS

The Randolph-Sheppard Act Amendments of 1974 make three important changes with respect to funds set aside from the operation of vending facilities. First, set-aside funds may now be used for purposes of retirement or pension funds, health insurance contributions, and provision of paid sick leave and vacation time. Second, the law specifies that if funds are set aside from the proceeds of a blind vending facility, the set aside must be figured on the net proceeds. Third, the concept of reducing set asides is now in the law since state licensing agencies are now able to utilize vending machine income as an increasing source of revenue.

A. Set Aside Priorities

Issues: The Conference considered the various purposes for which set-aside funds may be used by state agencies, as well as sources of other funding available to operate vending facility programs. Practices vary among the states with respect to their methods of financing. Some thirteen states have adopted a plan containing no set aside whatsoever. Several other states utilize set-aside funds for certain purposes and earn Federal dollars to assist in funding. In at least one jurisdiction, the operators, themselves, pay the entire bill for the vending facility program through set asides.

During the deliberations at the Conference, the distinction was made between program maintenance activities and efforts directed at expansion. Also, the purposes for which matching Federal funds can be used were delineated. Under current regulations, Federal dollars may be used at the eighty/twenty rate for replacement of equipment in an existing vending facility, purchase

of new equipment to establish a new vending facility, and management services. Federal participation is not available in paying the costs of maintenance of equipment, guaranteeing a fair minimum return to operators, retirement pensions, health insurance contributions, paid sick leave, or paid vacations. To the extent that these latter costs are involved in the vending facility program, they must be met with set-aside funds, state dollars, vending machine income, and/or funds from other sources.

Participants at the Conference recognized that much of the expense involved in conducting the vending facility program falls within a proper rehabilitation endeavor. The feeling was strong that rehabilitation activities should not be financed by the earnings of other blind persons who happen to have chosen to participate in the vending facility program. It was agreed that, if indeed there should be a set aside at all, it should only be applied to meeting routine maintenance costs of the program.

In addition to the above considerations, the Conference took special note of the issues arising from the fifth legal use for set-aside funds, namely, retirement or pension funds, health insurance contributions, and provision for paid sick leave and vacation time. With respect to retirement plans, it was observed that the Federal Pension Reform Act of 1974 now makes it possible for self-employed individuals to establish their own retirement programs. Concern was expressed that operators not be fooled into thinking that they would necessarily be any better off under a scheme administered by the state agency than they would by making arrangements of their own choice. The same view was taken regarding health insurance contributions, paid sick leave, and vacation time. If

these programs are to be supported largely from set-aside funds (as in many cases they certainly would be) all operators must realize that they will be paying the entire costs. The question is, should funds be set aside for these purposes, or should operators make their individual arrangements as self-employed persons?

Recommendations: The Conference recommends that regulations be promulgated which require state licensing agencies to separate (for accounting purposes) expenditures for program maintenance activities from those for other rehabilitation activities including training and placement of blind persons in the vending facility program. Also, establishment of new facilities to provide additional employment opportunities for the blind clearly must be recognized as regular rehabilitation expenditures by state agencies. Recognizing the various sources of funding which exist to support the vending facility program, all operators must undertake to inform themselves about the financing in their own states and then exert themselves to establish a system of priorities aimed at achieving reductions in set-aside charges, if such charges exist. Operators must make an effort to insure that an increasing share of the costs is covered by fully utilizing other funding sources. The Conference also recommends that operators recognize the ramifications of the fifth use for set-aside funds now permitted by law and be aware that, for the most part, they will be paying the bill.

B. Set Aside Base

Issues: Since the 1974 Amendments specify that set-aside charges (if any) must be figured on the net proceeds of a vending facility, many states will probably be forced to realign their regulations. In some parts

of the country, as much as fifty percent and more of the net proceeds from vending facilities is now set aside. At best, this charge is excessive. At worst, it is confiscatory. Section 210 of Public Law 93-516 reads in part: "(a) the Secretary, through the Commissioner, after a period of study not to exceed six months following the date of enactment of this title, and after full consultation with, and full consideration of the views of, blind vendors and state licensing agencies, shall promulgate national standards for funds set aside pursuant to Section 3(3) of the Randolph-Sheppard Act which includes maximum and minimum amounts for such funds, and appropriate contributions, if any, to such funds by blind vendors." Recognizing the realities of the situation facing some state licensing agencies which have accustomed themselves to reliance on set-aside funds as the sole or major source of financing, while at the same time opposing excessive charges to operators, the Conference considered various alternative proposals.

Recommendations: The Conference recommends that, with respect to national standards for a maximum and minimum set aside, state licensing agencies be permitted to charge no set aside, as is now the case. Some thirteen states have chosen this alternative, and they are operating successful vending facility programs.

With respect to a maximum set aside to be allowed, the Conference presents what it considers to be a "transitional arrangement." This proposal is as follows: During the first year after enactment of the Randolph-Sheppard Amendments of 1974, no state licensing agency shall charge more in terms of real dollars than it would have charged under its regulations prior to January 1, 1975. During the second year

after enactment, no state licensing agency shall charge in excess of (1) thirty percent of the net proceeds, or (2) the actual dollar amount it would have charged under its regulations prior to January 1, 1975, whichever of the two is the lesser. During the third year after enactment, no state licensing agency shall charge in excess of (1) twenty percent of the net proceeds, or (2) the actual dollar amount it would have charged under its regulations prior to January 1, 1975, whichever of the two is the lesser. During the fourth year after enactment, no state licensing agency shall charge in excess of (1) ten percent of the net proceeds, or (2) the actual dollar amount it would have charged under its regulations prior to January 1, 1975, whichever of the two is the lesser.

The Conference recommends that the term "net proceeds" be defined by regulations as follows: The actual net profit of the business itself prior to subtraction of the set aside, if any. The point of view presented by the Conference is that this four-year transition period should allow time for a complete assessment of the possibility of utilizing other sources of funding for the program. The Conference urges that the reduction in set-aside rates contained in this transition proposal be extended, wherever feasible, to removal of the charge during the fifth year after enactment.

Vending Facility Program Administration

Two additional and important concerns were raised at the Conference regarding administration of the vending facility program by state agencies.

A. Scope of Application of the Randolph-Sheppard Act

Issues: Since the state licensing agencies designated pursuant to the Randolph-Sheppard Act administer a total vending facility program on Federal, state, and private property, some question has been raised regarding the applicability of the Federal Act to vending facility operators on non-Federal property. Particularly, there are those who argue that a state might choose to administer its program in a manner which permits it to honor the fair hearing and arbitration provisions of the new amendments only for those operators having locations on Federal property. Those attending the Conference were deeply concerned that such plans not be permitted.

Recommendations: The Conference recommends that the Federal Regulations require each state licensing agency to provide assurances to the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare that, by virtue of its designation as a state licensing agency under the Randolph-Sheppard Act, the agency shall establish uniform policies and procedures affecting all blind vending facility operators participating in the program, and shall insure that all vending facility operators have equal rights for a fair hearing and arbitration pursuant to the Randolph-Sheppard Act, as amended.

B. Definition of Blindness

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Issues: Almost unnoticed among the myriad changes in the Randolph-Sheppard Act is the modification of the definition of blindness. Previously a "blind person" was defined as one having "not more than ten percentum visual acuity in the better eye with correction." Under the new law, this definition has been changed to the more standard one: "a person whose central visual acuity does not exceed twenty over two hundred in the better eye with correcting lenses, or whose visual acuity, if better than twenty over two hundred, is accompanied by a limit in the field of vision in the better eye to such a degree that its widest diameter subtends an angle of no greater than twenty degrees. The feeling was expressed at the Conference that this new definition of a blind person should bring about a new focus to the blind vendor program. Some participants reported situations where, under the old definition, persons not normally considered legally blind had been provided with vending facilities, while persons who were blind seeking opportunities were turned aside.

Recommendations: The Conference recommends that Federal Regulations be promulgated which specify the new definition of blindness, and that state licensing agencies be required to acquire and maintain appropriate medical records which document that all operators in the program meet the legal definition of blindness.

MORE CONVENTION ACTIVITIES

SIP WITH CEIP

This year, the Cultural Exchange and International Program Committee of the National Federation of the Blind is offer-

ing all Federationists with a proclivity for fun and fund raising an added incentive to arrive early at the NFB Convention. On Sunday afternoon, June 29, from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. following the Resolutions Com-

mittee meeting, the CEIP Committee invites you to a swinging foreign wine and cheese tasting party at the Palmer House. Tickets to the party will cost \$3.00 each, and will be available at or near the registration table of the Convention, throughout all day Sunday, as well as at the party itself. Each ticket will allow you to sip and feast on a set number of different wines and cheeses, with unlimited opportunities to come back for more with each additional \$3.00 purchase. Wines and cheeses will be abundant and varied: Dr. Jernigan himself has most generously donated four bottles of a vintage Bordeaux wine, four bottles of a high quality German white wine, four bottles of an exquisite California red wine, and four bottles of a wine whose origins he has not disclosed but whose alleged delights and consequences have to be experienced to be believed.

So why not start off the 1975 NFB Convention with a bang? Come, CEIP that wine and gorge that cheese! We guarantee both you and the NFB treasury a high for the rest of the week.

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NABST RAFFLE

You are cordially invited to visit the NABST table in the Exhibit Room in the Palmer House Hotel during registration hours on Sunday and Monday, June 29 and 30. We are pleased to announce that NABST-ers will be selling raffle tickets again this year on an all-electric portable Smith-Corona typewriter. You may buy one ticket for one dollar, or two for one dollar and fifty cents. If you are the lucky winner, you will also receive a correction cartridge for making quick and perfect erasures. In addition, we shall be

selling attractive memo pads which can be used by card slate-users, as well as pencil-pushers. They are wire bound and the perfect size for pocket or purse. The price: two for one dollar. Of course, for NABST members and would-be members, this will afford the last and most convenient opportunity to pay your dues so that you can vote in the business meeting Monday afternoon.

"So, y'all come, hear?"

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STUDENTS PLAN MEETING

The Student Division is anticipating the largest turnout ever for its meeting this year, and accordingly is planning the most educational and inspirational program in its history.

The program will feature five major items. We will have two panel discussions. One will focus on the role of state student divisions in the Federation. The other panel will deal with the subject of special programs on college campuses for handicapped students. Panel participants will include an official from the Office of Education, HEW; an official from a college in Ohio which has such a program; and two students.

Representatives from Educational Tape Recording for the Blind and the Carroll Rehabilitation Center for the Visually Impaired have been invited to participate in a dialogue on their philosophies and programs.

The final item on the program will be the election of new officers. All five positions are up for election.

Under the dynamic, dedicated leadership of Marc Maurer, president of the Student Division, this year's session promises to be

a most stimulating and enlightening experience for all.

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VIRGINIA CONVENTION

When the 17th annual convention of the NFB of Virginia concluded, the organized blind movement of the Old Dominion had pledged to work toward increasing State contributions to SSI payments, committed itself to the ending of discrimination against the blind in the State's banking system, established a student scholarship fund, formed a library liaison committee, expressed an interest in having a toll-free telephone line to the State agency, and urged the State agency to send its director to all NFBV and NFB conventions.

This year's convention, which took place from March 14 to 16, was hosted in Richmond by the Richmond Area Federation of the Blind. Attended by more than one hundred and thirty Federationists, the convention revealed the high spirits and determination which is the hallmark of all Federation conventions. This was the first convention presided over by NFBV President Walter Weber.

The resolution committing the organized blind movement of Virginia to working toward the increase of State contributions to the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) payments was based on a survey of thirty-three states and their respective contributions, as reported in the October 1974 issue of the *Braille Monitor* (another instance showing the value of our *Monitor* and the value in saving back issues). Based on the information in that article, it was discovered that Virginia was far below the national average of state contributions.

The resolution aims at increasing the Old Dominion State's contributions \$34 per month for individuals, thereby raising those payments to \$180, and increasing the aid to couples by \$71, bringing their monthly payments to \$290.

The resolution also seeks to tie State contributions to the cost-of-living index, thereby assuring the blind of Virginia an automatic escalation in payments in proportion to the rise in their costs of living. And, finally, the resolution extends payments to the blind not on the SSI rolls when the conversion was made from State to Federal administration of the program.

Virginia's blind have been experiencing more frequent discrimination by banks; but, it was only with the adoption of the Model White Cane Law in 1972 that we've had some recourse. To date, four banks have been convinced of their injury to the blind and have mended their ways, without a lawsuit; but, this might not always be the case, so we determined to go directly to the State Corporation Commission for help. That commission is the agency which polices the banking industry in Virginia and, once we've convinced it of the prejudice, we hope to obtain a final and binding decision from it which can be circulated throughout the banking industry. The decision should eliminate most of our problems with banks.

The impact of past convention speakers can last for several years, resulting in

actions not always traceable to the source. Our resolution establishing a student scholarship fund received tremendous impetus when NFB of California President Tony Mannino attended our 1973 NFBV convention. He told us how successful a tool a scholarship fund could be in making contacts with blind students and we remembered. Our scholarship fund is now a reality, with the first \$200 to be awarded during our 1976 State convention. Scholarship Fund Committee chairperson Jeanie Wood of Alexandria and her committee are now hard at work preparing the application blanks, which will be distributed this autumn. The scholarship will serve not only to bring the organized blind movement to the attention of blind students but should also go a long way toward increasing public awareness of us through both our State public relations office and our fund raising appeals.

NFBV members have been increasingly concerned over the quality of library service rendered by our State library for the blind. We have, therefore, determined to do what we can to improve those services and toward that end we established a library liaison committee, presently chaired by Mrs. Billie Ruth Schlank of Arlington. This committee is to meet with the State Librarian to learn more about the library program, to make concrete suggestions, and to provide Federation support for those programs which will noticeably increase the quality of our library program. We would also like to see a toll-free telephone line established so that the blind of Virginia, both commission clients and library users, can have immediate access to the State agency and its library.

Another instance of increasing the impact of blind Virginians on their State

agency is embodied in a resolution in which we have called upon the seven-member board of the Virginia Commission for the Visually Handicapped to send, at commission expense, its director to all NFBV and all NFB conventions. We are convinced that this exposure to the Federation in action can have only a good effect on any and all commission directors. But this resolution was intended not only to educate; we believe the State agency lacks an understanding of our philosophy, despite our efforts.

During the past eighteen months or so, we've actively tried to convince the Commission Board and its director, William T. Coppage, of the harm being done to the blind by the National Accreditation Council for Agencies Serving the Blind and Visually Handicapped (NAC). It should be noted here that the commission is NAC-accredited and that its director now sits on the NAC Board. While thus far unsuccessful in our efforts, we're committed to the struggle here and on the national level and we do not intend to stop until the Federation has achieved its goal.

It was during this convention session that we made a public promise to ourselves and the commission: to have the Federation represented on the commission's board. Our drive is being capably spearheaded by James Nelson, chairman of both our liaison and legislative committees.

Mr. Coppage was a speaker during this convention, discussing the problems and progress of the State agency. He came under close questioning during the question and answer portion of the program regarding the pay scales of workshop employees. According to shop employees present, the blind employee is not paid on a par with

his sighted co-worker, even though both do precisely the same kind of work. This disparity in pay scales was brought to the attention of the NAC on-site review team last autumn by President Weber. The team was in Virginia to reevaluate the commission because its initial five-year accreditation period had expired and it was time to determine whether the commission should be reaccredited for another five years. Despite the many shortcomings pointed out to the team, the commission was reaccredited. Complaints and recommendations regarding the inequity in pay and lack of blind people in supervisory positions have been relayed to the commission by its advisory committee on which the Federation has members.

The two libraries for the blind in Virginia were represented at this year's convention. One, the Braille Circulating Library for the Blind, was represented by Mrs. Gladys Billings, Coordinator, and Mrs. Lucille Robinson, head of the Braille Department. The librarians recounted the history of the Braille Circulating Library and outlined plans for the future, especially the goal of having material available on cassette tapes. Mrs. Judith Dunham, Librarian, Library for the Blind, was on hand and she discussed all of the services available to blind readers. She incorporated into her remarks some of the things blind readers can look for in general library services in the future.

We had two innovations this year: the first being a presidential report. Among other items, President Weber noted that the blind of Virginia would be exempted from having to pay the twenty-cents-per call for telephone directory assistance. The report also dealt with solution of some organization problems, statement of intent to organize all cities in Virginia having a

population of 20,000 or more, fundraising, remembrance of the National Office in fundraising, increasing public relations, and how the State office had been of help to several Federationists having trouble with SSI checks. The second innovation was the singing of Federation songs, under the fine leadership of Mrs. Billie Ruth Schlank, throughout the convention program.

Milton Perry chaired the discussion on "Occupations for the Blind." He rose admirably to a difficult situation caused by the absence of several panelists. However, his creative leadership and the interest aroused by the panelists on hand, got us over the tight spot. Participants were Mrs. Pauline King, an employee of the Richmond Workshop, named Outstanding Employee for 1974 by her colleagues, and Patrick Hayes, a blind mathematician.

Our banquet was highly successful with one hundred and fifty-five Federationists and guests on hand to hear James Gashel, Chief of the NFB Washington Office. Mr. Gashel delivered a marvelously inspirational speech and demonstrated the same brilliance in writing and delivery that he reveals in his daily work for the Federation.

Mr. Gashel's contributions to the success of our convention were not limited to the evening's address. And while not mentioned 'til now, the contributions of Mrs. Arlene Gashel were not infrequent. Indeed, we in the Federation are fortunate to have both on our side.

James Nelson was given the highest award we in the NFBV can bestow on a fellow-Federationist: The Marion J. Kelley Award. This is an award to be given only when merit warrants and was given to Mr. Nelson because of his constant loyalty,

service, and devotion to the cause. Mr. Nelson has held innumerable offices in the State organization and much of our success over the years can be credited to him. This award was created to commemorate the memory of a sighted member who gave unstintingly of her time, skills, and efforts to the cause.

The Piedmont Federation of the Blind of Hamilton was awarded our recognition for having the greatest membership growth this year. This marks the third consecutive year the chapter has won this award.

On Sunday we heard from Mrs. Marion McDonald, chairperson of our White Cane Week Campaign Committee. Plans at that time were well under way for our second mailing. This fund raising effort proved profitable last year not only financially,

but in the Camaraderie of Federationists. All of the chapters participated in gathering addresses and typing labels, which enabled us to achieve a broadly-based campaign. Special mention must be given, again, to the Potomac Federation, presided over by Alan Schlank, which provided the manpower for the actual stuffing of the envelopes. It is our policy to share our net proceeds from this campaign with the NFB White Cane Week Committee.

Our NFB Convention delegate for 1975 will be President Walt Weber, with Second Vice President Robert McDonald serving as alternate.

In 1976 we will have our State convention hosted in Leesburg by the Piedmont Federation. The Skyline Federation in Harrisonburg will host the 1977 convention. □

WE LOSE TWO FEDERATIONISTS

Norma Spencer, president of our Utah affiliate died from injuries from an accident which occurred on April 29. On the evening of that day she was feeling restless and decided to take a walk and do an errand in their pleasant suburban neighborhood. She was returning home when she was struck by a pickup truck and dragged along before the driver could stop. Though surgery was attempted, she died of internal injuries without regaining consciousness.

Norma and her attorney-husband lived in a suburb of Salt Lake City and had five children. She worked for the State as a rehabilitation teacher at the Center for the Blind teaching crafts. She had first rate skills and was a good teacher.

Norma was in the middle of her second term as State president and was working to bring the affiliate along. She had served the State group in many other capacities and will be sorely missed.

W. C. Hahle, of Sumner, Iowa also died at the end of April, after a long illness. Mr. Hahle, a practicing attorney, had a long and active interest in the Federation movement.

Mr. Hahle was one of the Iowa Commission's Board members when President Jernigan was appointed as Director in 1958 and was most helpful in those formative

years. His interest in the Federation led him to serve as president of the State affiliate as well as in other capacities. Mr. Hahle was interested in politics and served as County

Attorney in the 1940's. His son, Paul Hahle, is a teacher of industrial arts in the Orientation Center at the Commission.

□

RECIPE OF THE MONTH

SEGAL SAUCE FOR SALAD

BY

ARTHUR SEGAL

INGREDIENTS:

6 small stuffed olives
6 slices of sweet pickle
1 large radish
1 cherry tomato or chunk
Pinches of:
garlic powder
dry mustard
dill seed to taste
 $\frac{1}{2}$ pint of sour cream
 $\frac{1}{2}$ pound of Roquefort or bleu cheese
4 ounces of dry sherry

METHOD:

In a blender completely liquify the first four ingredients. Then add herbs and spices. Reduce blender speed and add sour cream, cheese, and sherry.

Excellent on mixed vegetables, or hearts of lettuce. Hard boiled egg, crushed bacon or anchovies may be added.

□

MONITOR MINIATURES

On the third of each month some 31 million Americans eagerly await the mail carrier because on that day they receive their Social Security checks. Unfortunately the Trust Fund is getting low for the first time since the program began forty years ago. This is so because benefits are beginning to exceed revenues. A ready solution is to raise the taxes which workers and their employers pay into the Fund, but the maximum has been more than doubled just since 1971 and a taxpayers rebellion may occur if the cost continues to rise.

In 1972 Congress put a cost-of-living escalator provision into the system. As a result an 8.7 percent increase will be effective July of this year. With this increase, benefits will have risen 83 percent in just six years while the cost of living has gone up about 51 percent during this same period. To help find a viable solution, the Social Security Advisory Council has recommended that \$7 billion be placed in the Fund from general tax revenues. While this plan is opposed by the Secretary of HEW, the only alternative would seem to be to again raise the Social Security tax. However, the maximum tax already will rise from \$825 this year to \$895 next year and to \$983 in 1977. This is done by increasing the maximum amount of wages on which the tax is based, from \$14,100 to \$16,800 in two steps. The current tax rate is 5.85 percent of the wages received by the employee and an equal amount paid by the employer, or a total of 11.7 percent.

Complicating the whole picture is the fact that workers are retiring earlier and living longer, reducing the ratio of those

who pay into the Trust Fund as against those who collect from it. Certainly it is sure that somewhere down the road the Congress will have to wrestle with the real problem of how to keep the Social Security Fund solvent.

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Two Holiday Inns in Minnesota have come up with an innovation that should be of help to the blind. Restaurants at the Rochester Downtown and the Minneapolis Downtown Holiday Inns now offer menus in Braille and enlarged type. The menus are exact duplications of the standard menus used in the restaurants. Several other Holiday Inns in the Midwest offer Braille menus and officials of the hotel-motel chain say the service may be expanded to other Inns.

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The NFB of Colorado's *News and Views* contains the following: "There's been a lot of chatter about Mountain Bell's proposed rate increase pending before the Public Utilities Commission that would include a 20¢ charge for directory assistance above three calls per month. Let it be known once and for all that this charge would not apply to handicapped persons. Mr. Hanna of Mountain Bell, explained the computer would have to be notified of whether you were handicapped or not. Then, each time you made a "directory assistance" call, the computer would credit you as being excluded from the 20¢ charge. Perhaps some of this stems from a letter we wrote Mountain Bell some time ago stating the need of the blind for directory assistance, preferably

without the necessity of explaining your physiology to the operator. Under the proposed system, a computer would identify calls from your home number as those of a handicapped person, not to be charged for directory assistance, although calls from a pay phone might be questioned. To obtain this service, the Telephone Company would require you to present a statement from your doctor, or perhaps from Rehab, or possibly an organization such as ours. Once you are certified, as handicapped, the computer will do the rest."

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The *Newsletter* of the Virginia Commission for the Visually Handicapped contains the following: The World Health Organization (WHO) recently polled its 135 member nations for statistics about blindness and according to their figures some 10 to 15 million people in the world are blind. In Europe and the United States, the blindness rate is one in 500, in Asia and Africa, it is one in 100, sometimes higher. Thirty percent of the people in west and equatorial Africa have onchocerciasis or 'river blindness' so-named because it is caused by a species of black fly which breeds along rivers. Kenya is controlling and eradicating this fly.

In India there are 125 million cases of trachoma, which can be controlled with antibiotics. And simple malnutrition is a leading cause of blindness in undeveloped countries. WHO estimates that half the blindness in the world could have been prevented or avoided had it been detected in time. Visual problems affect about half the population of the United States or about 126 million people.

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Lincoln (Nebraska) Federation of the Blind has new officers as follows: President, Barbara Beach; first vice president, Karen Woodford; secretary, Laurie Beach; treasurer, Betty Hofmann; board members, Sylvia Johnson and Ruth Ireland.

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The Asotin County Chapter of the NFB of Washington held elections recently with the following results: Bob Pierce, president; Roy Loeffelbein, treasurer; and Maida Bircher, secretary.

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The NFB of Connecticut is planning its State convention for October 24, 1975 at the Elks Hall in Danbury.

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A far-reaching investigation into problems surrounding implementation of the seventeen-month-old Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program has been launched by the Senate Finance Committee and will be completed no later than mid-year, according to Senator Russell Long, committee chairman. Announcement of the "in-depth staff inquiry" into SSI by a Finance Committee task force was one of a series of major developments last month involving the Social Security Administration (SSA). The decision to undertake a full-scale investigation of SSI was prompted by thousands of complaints received by Congressional offices since the program was started on January 1, 1974. Most of the complaints centered around lengthy delays in processing applications and an unusually high rejection rate of prospective beneficiaries.

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